## Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for stereoselectively producing an E-3-acyloxyacrylonitrile compound of formula (3)

$$Ar^{1} \xrightarrow{CN} Ar^{2} \qquad (3)$$

$$0 \xrightarrow{R^{1}}$$

or a Z-3-acyloxyacrylonitrile compound of formula (4)

$$\begin{array}{c|c}
C N \\
A r^1 \\
A r^2 O
\end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{c|c}
R^1 \\
4)
\end{array}$$

which comprises reacting a 3-oxopropionitrile compound of formula (1)

$$A r^{1} \xrightarrow{C N} A r^{2} \qquad (1)$$

with an acid chloride of formula (2)

$$R^{1}$$
— $C - C 1$  (2)

wherein

 $Ar^1$  and  $Ar^2$  are independently of each other an aromatic substituent that may be substituted, and  $R^1$  is an alkyl group that may be substituted, or an aromatic substituent that may be substituted, and

the reaction is conducted with removal of hydrogen chloride as a by-product from the system without using a base, or by using an organic base as a base or an inorganic base of alkali metal or alkaline earth metal as a base, to thereby regulate stereostructure of reaction product.

- 2-4. (Canceled)
- 5. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the 3-oxopropionitrile compound of formula (1) has been produced by reacting an acetonitrile compound of formula (5)

$$Ar^{1}CH_{2}CN$$
 (5)

with an aromatic ester compound of formula (6)

$$A r^2 - C - 0 R^2$$
 (6)

wherein Ar<sup>2</sup> is an aromatic substituent that may be substituted, and R<sup>2</sup> is an alkyl group that may be substituted, by use of alkali metal alkoxide in an aliphatic hydrocarbon solvent, while removing alcohol as a by-product by azeotropic distillation in a separating tank.

- 6. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 5, wherein said alcohol has been removed in the presence of a polar solvent.
  - 7-16. (Canceled)